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ABSTRACT

The seven papers presented in this document are the products of a Think Tank held concurrently with a 1985 conference on the black family. Approximately 45 representatives of the Greater Cleveland community participated in the Think Tank, which was divided into ten task forces that addressed issues that are critical to the survival and development of the black family. This report presents issues that were identified in the Think Tank and in the overall conference, and each paper includes a list of recommendations which are being disseminated within the Cleveland area to form an action agenda for those who work on behalf of black families. The papers are the following: (1) "The Black Church and the Black Family" (Otis Moss, Jr.); (2) "The Black Man" (Paul Hill, Jr.); (3) "Black Male/Female Relationships" (Paul Hill, Jr.); (4) "The Black Woman" (Janice Hale-Benson and Brenda Y. Terrell); (5) "Education, Child Rearing and Socialization in Black Families" (Janice Hale-Benson); (6) "The Role of the Media in Supporting the Black Family" (Richard L. Jones); and (7) "The Black Elderly in Black Families" (LaVonne Turner). (KH)

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CONFERENCE REPORT

Conference on the Black Family
Sponsored by
Olivet Institutional Baptist Church
in cooperation with
College of Education, Cleveland State University
The City of Cleveland
School of Applied Social Sciences,
Case Western Reserve University
United Way Services of Cleveland

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CONFERENCE REPORT

A Conference on The Black Family was held in Cleveland, Ohio on September 26, 27, and 28, 1985 at Cleveland State University. This conference was sponsored by Olivet Institutional Baptist Church in cooperation with the College of Education of Cleveland State University, the City of Cleveland, the School of Applied Social Sciences at Case Western Reserve University and United Way Services of Cleveland.

As a part of the conference, a Think Tank was held that was chaired by Dr. Brenda Y. Terrell. Approximately 45 representatives of the Greater Cleveland community participated in the Think Tank which was held concurrently with the conference. The participants were divided into ten task forces that addressed issues that are critical to the survival and development of the Black family. Each task force was given a charge and each prepared a report at the end of their deliberations.

Following the conference, the Advisory Committee reviewed the report of the Think Tank and prepared the Conference Report that is contained herein. This report is a presentation of issues that were identified in the Think Tank and in the overall conference. It also contains a list of recommendations that represent the collective thinking of the conference planners. These recommendations are being disseminated within the Greater Cleveland community with the hope that they will form the basis for an action agenda for those who work on behalf of Black families. It is our hope that this effort will

allow our conference to continue where most conferences end -- to plan action for change.

We wish to take this opportunity to thank again, the above named sponsors of the conference, the advisory committee members, the volunteers, the workshop leaders and moderators, the featured speakers and most of all the conferees who helped to make this conference a success.

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THE BLACK CHURCH AND THE BLACK FAMILY

By Reverend Otis Moss, Jr.

The Conference on The Black Family sponsored by Olivet Institutional Baptist Church and co-sponsored by United Way Services, Cleveland State's College of Education, The City of Cleveland, and Case Western Reserve's School of Applied Social Sciences was an affirmation of hope and re-affirmation of serious challenges facing the Black family.

First, the Conference affirmed the Black Church as an indispensable force in maintaining Black family stability, growth, and fulfillment. Every keynote and featured speaker, beginning with Dr. Andrew Billingsley as the opening keynote speaker, proclaimed the Black Church as a necessary force in Black family life. Dr. Billingsley's presentation had four key propositions, two of which affirmed the necessary role of the Black church in providing the survival foundation for the Black family.[1]

Dr. Lawrence Gary's research shows that the largest number of successful black men have a strong religious and/or church linkage. Dr. Gary is a primary example of what his research shows.

Judge Perry B. Jackson, renown jurist and alumnus of Case Western Reserve University, proclaimed at our church eight years ago, that during his decades of experience as a judge, seldom did anyone appear before him as an accused who had a strong church background and a stable family foundation.

Several years ago, at a Conference at Vanderbilt University on the Black Male in Religious Context, scholars from Meharry Medical College, Tennessee State University, and Vanderbilt Divinity School had similar findings and the same basic thesis. However, a special research project, done by Dr. Ruth of Meharry Medical College, has gathered some very challenging data on the relationship or influence of the Black church on the Black male.[2]

In our Think Tank Task Force on the Black Church, the focus of the discussion was the Black Church as:

1. The cradle of Black leadership.
2. The household of Black culture and education.
3. The house of integrity in the midst of brutality and dislocation.
4. The house of hope in a community of despair.
5. The house of unity and family reinforcement, extension, and service.
6. The primary custodian of Black culture.
7. The community house that calls us together for refuge and celebration.
8. The spiritual house where the Gospel of Jesus Christ has kept us from generational suicide.
9. The house of liberation, freedom, and "somebodiness" where a theology of hope is proclaimed and practiced.
10. The house where faith and fact proclaim that "we are neither motherless, nor fatherless, nor childless - We are family."

Every Task Force saw the Black Church as a co-partner in every community endeavor to respond to the rights, interests, and needs of the Black Family.

"Religion as a force in Black America is an apt topic for the present time. First and foremost among the reasons is the fact of the Church's singularity as a resource for the total Black community.[3]

Speaking of Martin Luther King, Jr., Dr. James Cone says, "Anyone, therefore, who wishes to understand properly his life and thought must make the Black Church the primary source for the analysis."[4]

It is not an exaggeration to say that the Black Church continues to be the heart, lungs, and nerve center of the Black Community. It is the drum beat of the Black masses and the soul of Black essence. The Black Church is Richard Allen and Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, and Mary McLeod Bethune. The Black Church is Benjamin E. Mays and Howard Thurman. It is a Martin Luther King, Jr. and a Jesse Jackson. It is an Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. and a William Gray III (Pastor/ Congressman). It is a Barbara Jordan and a Coretta Scott King; it is an Andrew Young, a Maynard Jackson, and a Walter Fauntroy. The Black church is the cradle and primary stage for Aretha Franklin, Stephanie Mills, and many more.

This is not to suggest that all issues and challenges will be quickly resolved through the structure of the Black Church, but it is to suggest that no basic issue or challenge will be resolved in the Black Family and/or the Black Community without the involvement and dynamic participation of the Black church, its leadership and laity.

One of the significant moral characteristics of our conference is that we did not become overwhelmed with negati-

vism and internal assaults on each other, with a long list of vituperative vilifications against individuals, the black middle class, leadership, the Black Church, and black achievers. We affirmed the value of black scholars, research experts, black institutions, and the urgent necessity for utilizing all of these in a deliberate, consistent, and serious way.

It is the position of our conference (participants and sponsors) that the Black church must resist any and all attempts to reduce it to a minor political tool of opportunism. It must actively demand respect and participation in the development of public and social policy and every significant agenda that affects the right interests and needs of black people in particular and all people in general. We will not save the black family without the Black church and this is perhaps good and very good.

[1]See Conference Proceedings, yet to be published.

[2]The State of Black America 1982, published by National Urban League, pp. 230-232.

[3]Ibid. p. 197

[4]The Western Journal of Black Studies, Vol. 8, Number 2 - Summer 1984, p. 94.

THE BLACK MAN

By Paul Hill, Jr.

Black men in America are an endangered species! An endangered species is one which suffers a serious reduction in its population and faces the threat of extinction because of its exposure to unfavorable social and environmental conditions.

When social indicators and statistics are examined, Black men are found to be on the negative side in regard to income, employment, education and health. The results of such inequities have crippling consequences on male-female relations, families, communities, as well as for the society at large.

Over three million Black men in America are unemployed (Essence, 1985). Everyday scenes of idle men--whether huddled on the corner or crowded on the boulevard--are grim reminders that forces are in motion that strike Black males harder than either their White counterparts or women of any race. Black communities still tend to respond to the crisis by tackling familiar social ills, such as poor education, a lack of basic skills and the need to teach job seekers how to present themselves with confidence during interviews. But the problem is more complex than that. To analyze Black male unemployment (and underemployment) is to confront a severe, systemic problem--the kind that can neither be cured with a new round of job training programs nor dissolved by teaching workplace

etiquette. A reality of the 80's and the future is the production of more goods and services with less labor and cheaper labor outside the United States. The shift from a labor intensive to capital intensive market is a reality.

Just trying to find a reliable figure for total unemployment among Black men illustrates the scope and complexity of the crisis. As of spring, 1985, The Bureau of Labor's statistics summarized Black male unemployment (16 and older) as 16.2 percent. This was nearly three times the rate of 5.6 percent for White men. The rate, which excludes prison inmates and those serving abroad in the military, translates into about one million jobless Black men. But, even those figures are misleadingly low. The government doesn't count anyone as unemployed unless they are "in the work force", or actively looking for a job. In the second quarter of 1985, there were 2.39 million Black men listed as "not in the work force"--in other words, more than twenty-seven percent of all civilian Black males over sixteen were automatically excluded before the government began to calculate the unemployment (Essence, 1985). Figuring out a true rate of Black male joblessness would mean adding the number of "officially" unemployed men to those who are not bothering to look anymore. By those standards, we find a true percentage of unemployment among Black men that, at the bare minimum, exceeds twenty percent of Black males. And some researchers, noting that an estimated ten percent of adult Black males were unaccounted for by The 1980 Census, believe the rate could be much, much higher.

A man's worth in America has been based on his ability to provide. A people whom The Society has always denied social value--personality--has also lost economic value. Thanks to old Black backs and new fangled machines, the sweat chores of The Nation are done. Now, thirty million Blacks face a society that is brutally pragmatic, technologically accomplished, structurally racist, increasingly overcrowded, and surly. In such a society, the absence of social and economic value is a crucial factor in anyone's fight for a future.

The government has been one of the foremost employers of Black Americans. During the transition into automation, it became even more so for the Black worker. Indeed, if it were not for the government, Blacks who lost their jobs in the business world would have swelled the unemployment ratio to fantastic heights. During the 80's the economics of business appear intent upon weeding out the Black male as an inefficient worker; in addition, the government presently, with the exception of the military, has become a dwindling source for employment.

John Hopkins Research Center reported in 1981 that for every one percent (1%) increase in unemployment, there is a 4.3 percent increase in mental patients, 4.1 percent increase in suicide, 5.7 percent increase in murders, 4.0 percent increase in prisoners.

The leading killers of Black men are heart disease, cancer, homicide, accidents, and suicides, respectively. Black boys outnumber Black girls 1.03 to 1.0 at birth. But upon reaching their eighteenth birthday, available women outnumber men 1.8 to

1.0. The life expectancy of Black men is 65.5; White men, 69.9; Black women, 74.5; and White women, 77.8. These figures have much significance.

There exists the dual dilemma of Black men in America--race and masculinity. The experiences of males and females--Black and White--in their lives are critical and different from each other. Black men face certain problems related to institutional racism and environments which often do not prepare them very well for the fulfillment of masculine roles. In addition to the problems created by institutional and overt discrimination, they encounter the negative stereotyping that exists on all levels about them: Being socially castrated, insecure in their male identity, and lacking in a positive self-concept. Most of these negative stereotypes have been perpetuated by the social science literature, media, and have stemmed from a failure to understand the meaning and form of masculinity in Black culture and as a result of the application of White norms to Black behavior.

To be young, Black and male in America is a precarious and dangerous state of being. Approximately fifty-four percent of the Black population is under twenty-four years of age. Black teenage unemployment for the second quarter of 1985 was 40.3 percent, the highest of any group of workers in the United States. The similar rate for White teenagers was 17.4 percent. However, it has been shown in other surveys that the "real" unemployment rate is sometimes three or four times higher than the official unemployment figures. According to Dr. Bernard Anderson, sixty-five percent of America's Black teenagers are

unemployed. He further warned that if the economy does not improve in the near future, a whole generation of young Blacks will enter adulthood in the 1980's without ever having held a job. The implications and ramifications of such a situation are absolutely disastrous.

One might dismiss the problem of the unemployment of Black youths as being relatively insignificant in the overall picture of Black oppression. Yet, to many low-income Black families, the additional income of their teenage children is vital to their existence. This is particularly true during a period when many adult males have lost their jobs. Moreover, many of these young Blacks will, themselves, be heads of households. Almost one-third of all Black births in some inner cities are to Black teenagers between the ages of fifteen and nineteen. When these teenage fathers are unable to find work, the children are forced into dependency on the meagre sum alloted to them by welfare institutions. Young Black males face an economic reality entirely different from that of the White teenager, who can more effectively use his kinship and "friend of the family" network to secure employment.

Black male enlistment in The Armed Forces has increased. In 1980, over thirty-one percent of the new recruits in the "volunteer" army were Blacks. Thirty-one percent of the enlisted personnel (high school education or less) and only seven percent of the officers' rank (college education) were Black (Staples, 1982). Blacks in the army have encountered a number of dehumanizing experiences: racism, intimidation, assignment to more dangerous duty than Whites, and failure to

get assignments, medals and promotions on an equal basis with Whites. Blacks receive proportionally more non-honorable discharges than Whites in all branches of the service (The Urban League Review, Spring, 1975). Yet in 1975, 51.8 percent of all Blacks eligible for re-enlistment did so compared with 32.5 percent of the eligible Whites. A major reason for this higher re-enlistment is their knowledge that there are fewer job opportunities for them in the civilian society. Unemployment rate for Black veterans between the ages of twenty and twenty-four increased from 22.7 in the fall quarter, 1974 to 30.0 in the first quarter of 1975. Vietnam era veterans have an even higher unemployment rate--fifty percent (National Urban League--Quarterly Economic Report on The Black Worker, May, 1975).

The proportion of Blacks in the "volunteer" army have declined because of the spiraling jobless rate of Whites who also flocked to its environs and the concern of the political elite about the implications of a predominantly Black military force. There were probably just as many Blacks who tried to enlist in the Army, but were denied entrance in favor of Whites who made higher (or lower) scores on the Armed Forces qualification test. While there may be a cultural bias in such tests, the lower score of Blacks also reflects the substandard education they receive in the public schools. It is instructive to note that sixty-six percent of Black enlistees have high school diplomas compared to fifty-five percent of White enlistees. Yet, it is in the area of education that young Black men continue to suffer the fate of society's underclass.

Education for Blacks in America continues to be of an inferior quality. Performance of Black students, particularly males in urban and suburban schools, continues to be poor. The negative consequences for Black males is further highlighted in drop-out and push-out statistics. Blacks constitute fifteen percent of the total public school enrollment, yet there were twenty-one percent of drop-outs with Black males constituting the highest category. Thus, the pool of potential college bound students is effectively reduced. In 1980, there were only seventy-four Black men with at least four years of college for every one hundred Black women with equivalent credentials. Among college bound high school seniors in 1980, there were only sixty-six Black males for every one hundred females.

A Black Child-Care Conference conducted in September of 1981 in Columbus, Ohio, noted that in 1950, home had the greatest impact on children; followed closely by school, church, peer group, and television. In 1980, home remained number one, but peer group had moved into second position, followed closely by television (which is predicted to be number one in 1986), school, and church. In as brief a period as thirty years, much has happened to the family structure. In review of the 1980 findings, looking at the home, sixty-two percent of all Black children live with a single-parent.

The church has not been able to capture the minds of our youth, and specifically, boys. I would hope concerned ministers and church members will look inward and ask themselves why youth, and male youth specifically, have not been attracted.

Recent Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) data revealed that eighty-three percent of all elementary school teachers in 1979 were females, while only 10.1 percent of this number were Black females. Black males constituted only 1.2 percent of the total seventeen percent of elementary teachers who were males. Further, 45.7 percent of all full-time secondary school teachers were female, with Black males accounting for 3.2 percent of the 54.3 percent male participation rate. When teacher aides were considered, the male/female imbalances increased. The EEOC data indicate that 95.5 percent of all teacher aides were female, with twenty percent of this number being Black. Black males accounted for 1.3 percent of the remaining 4.5 percent male teacher aides (Patton, 1981). Based on these figures, it could be concluded that a majority of Black Americans can spend an entire career in public schools and have very little interaction with a Black male teacher, counselor, or administrator.

The complexity of inferior education to Black youth, particulaly males, is related to a lack of male teachers, a racist/irrelevant curriculum designed to maintain the status quo (training) versus problem solving (education), and the quality and continuity of teaching staff (teachers with low expectations and placing their best teachers, including men, in the upper grades, where the most undisciplined children are, to maintain order).

The fastest and greatest influence on most male youth are the streets. There is a direct correlation between age and street time. The transition from the primary division to the

intermediate and upper division parallels the increased street time. Street time increases as male youth become older, because most parents spend less time and give more freedom to their children.

It is in the area of crime and violence that Black youth are clearly implicated. The largest numbers of crimes against the person and acts of theft are committed by Black males under the age of twenty-four. A majority of all homicide victims in the United States last year were Black and the perpetuator of the crime, typically, was a young Black male between the ages of twenty and twenty-four. Hence, it is of little surprise that the number one cause of death among Black males aged fifteen to thirty-four is homicide. Between 1960 and 1973, the increase in homicide prevented any improvement in the life expectancy rate of Black males.

In 1972, Black inmates were forty-two percent of the nation's jail population. Most of them were young, poorly educated, low-paid wage earners or unemployed prior to their arrest. About fifty-nine percent of them reported an annual income of less than three thousand dollars ($3000.00) a year. Among the prisoners sentenced to death, fifty percent of them were Black. Within that group of Black Death Row prisoners, thirty-five percent of Blacks were under twenty-four years of age compared to only nine percent of Whites. (U.S. Bureau of Census, The Social and Economic Status of The Black Population in The U.S., 1974).

While America's chaotic and irresponsible economy is the primary reason for the consignment of the Black youth to the

ranks of the underclass and the prisons, there are other subtle influences in American life which socialize Black youths into violence. Among them is the media. The emphasis upon violence in the mass media is undoubtedly related to acts of violence among Black youth. It is estimated that by age twelve, the average child has witnessed ten thousand acts of violence on television alone. (Carter and Strickland, T.V. Violence and Children, Sage, 1975). Since Black children watch television more than children from other groups, the impact of such violence is even greater.

As is true in the majority of youth, Blacks have a variety of socializing agents and institutions upon which to draw for their male identity. Being exposed to the school, family, mass media, and peer group means that a number of different values and roles are being conveyed to them at any point in time. Family structure and socio-economic status are considered key factors in determining the kind of role models presented to the growing child. School creates a dilemma since the traditional classrooms are generally oriented toward feminine values. Teachers are disproportionately female, and the behaviors tolerated and encouraged are those that are more natural for girls. Most adult male role models "in the street" and "on the block" present negative images of manhood and achievement to impressionable male children. The androgynous images of current popular singers with sex-oriented lyrics and other mass media/super jock types leave lasting impressions on youth.

The tendency of many Black youth to associate masculinity with hypersexuality and violence is the result of socialization

and exposure to violence in their environment and in the mass media. Whether this becomes their only concept of masculinity depends on the opportunity to fulfill other concepts of masculinity. Violence through individual and/or group-gang activity as a means of status conferral will continue to exist among Black youth as long as the opportunity structure for other expressions of their masculinity remains blocked by the forces of institutional racism. Not all of the response to failure to fulfill their manhood is expressed in anti-social behavior. Some of it is aggression turned inward. In New York City, the highest cause of death among Black youth is narcotic addiction. Another symptom of their feelings of powerlessness and hopelessness is a suicide rate among Black youths that is higher than that of the total population of all youth. Others may seek the fate of the criminal, the drug addict, and the suicide victim by joining the ranks of the volunteer army.

It is patently clear that the central concerns of Black men are not relinquishing male privilege or forging new concepts of an androgynous or sex-role egalitarianism. We must first and foremost deal with the issue of survival. It is not that we have abused the privileges accruing to men, but that we have never been given the opportunity to realize even the minimal prerequisites of manhood--life-sustaining employment and the ability to support a family. To a large extent, these problems are confined to a certain segment of the Black population, but they constitute a very large population of all Black men. We should also realize that the more these legitimate aspirations to manhood are retarded, the greater the tendency to assert

them in other areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS/STRATEGY

* Mobilizing/educating youth service providers/funders that are involved in policy-making/decision-making to issues/needs of Black males.

  Impacting agency Boards to be more responsive to issues that relate to culture, manhood development--Rites of Passage, and the development of youth entrepreneurial skills/ businesses.

* Develop programs and organizations to protect and develop Black boys.

  Rites of Passage programs that provide positive male role models, emotional and spiritual development, emphasis on education as related to problem solving and decision-making, and provision of socialization/acculturation development from an Afro-Centric perspective.

* Re-definition of manhood and prerequisites for manhood (What is a man and how is it determined and reflected?)

* Utilizing the extended family concept and tradition as a model for programs (i.e., Marcus Garvey School and Sheenway School and Culture in Los Angeles; and The House of Umoja in Philadelphia).

* Mobilizing/educating/developing a Black male/family support/action agenda vis-a-vis the clergy, politicians, professionals, Greeks and Masons.
* Development of a local institution/organization that advocates and informs on behalf of Black males. Advocacy, research, dissemination, coordination, planning and monitoring/accountability functions.
* Creation/support of supplemental programs and independent Black institutions; review and study of successful (positively impact Black male youth) supplemental programs and independent Black institutions; why are they successful?
* Organizing/educating a group of Black males to function as Big Brothers/resources.
* Development of an African frame of reference, which would be the criteria of image selection.
* Recognizing that the majority of Black children (particularly males) have not been educated, and that this is not the priority of the one percent ruling class in America, and it is perpetuated by Black apathy.
* The development of positive self-images and discipline in Black children is the primary responsibility of the parent. Teachers should provide supplemental nurturance and high expectations. If the parent does not fulfill their primary responsibility, every available institution must take

heed to develop positive self-images and discipline in Black children.

* An assessment of local Black family statistics and programs as related to socio-economic conditions, needs, and services.
* Create a network or coalition of individuals and organizations operating via mission, responsibilities, and roles.
* Discussing and developing a plan/agenda for economic development as related to creating entrepreneurial skills and small businesses.

    Development of a Junior Achievement model from an urban Afro-Centric perspective based on cooperative economics. Availability of seed capital.

* Addressing the turf issues as reflected vis-a-vis churches, social/political areas and definitions of community which are negatively impacting the ability and coordination of services to the Black family.
* Researching local trends (socio-economic) with future implications for the Black man and action prescriptions for change.

    Futuristic trends: Linking Black youth with the future.

* Impact Media (print and electronic) to be more responsive to Black concerns (i.e., how Black men and women are portrayed).

* Challenging and holding accountable institutions, organizations, and individuals that have unjustifiably abused and assaulted Black males.

BLACK MALE/FEMALE RELATIONSHIPS

By Paul Hill, Jr.

The most explosive issue in Black America is the widening gap between Black males and females. Black males are lagging behind Black females socially, professionally and academically, and analysts and would-be-wives believe that things are going to get a great deal worse before they get better.

The sexual, social and psychological consequences of this situation have been disastrous. The Black family has been adversely affected; and many Black women are dismayed by their inability to find what they call "good and eligible" men in a variety of areas: schools, colleges, offices, churches, lounges and social organizations.

The problem, moreover, is total; it cuts across all class lines and extends from the grammar school to the highest levels of the professional and business world. Evelyn Moore of the National Black Child Development Institute says that "in almost every single dimension of social service--foster care, adoption, juvenile justice--there's an overflow of Black children and a disproportionate number of Black boys. Black boys are just dropping out of the whole scene, and we're facing a real crisis."

The relationship of Black males and females as mothers and sons (mothers raise their daughters and love their sons), fathers and daughters, friend to friend (non-romantic) and brothers and sisters at work (supervisor-employee relationship)

is strained. Many of the problems relative to male/female relationship stresses have little or nothing to do with the characteristics of individual Black men and women, but are a reflection of structural problems. It should be remembered that most Black women are still confined to low-paying jobs at the bottom of the economic ladder. There is a disturbing and growing sexual imbalance at almost every level of the Black community. A critical problem here, is the Black sex ratio--the number of Black males per one hundred females--has been declining since 1910 and was reported at a low of 89.7 in 1981. Sociologist Robert Staples has said that if you exclude married men, imprisoned men and homosexuals, there is only one acceptable Black male for every five unmarried Black women. The revolutions of The Sixties--social, sexual and racial--and the crisis of the American economy have compounded the traditional problems, and there is mounting evidence that increasing numbers of Black males are experiencing difficulty in maintaining their balance.

As oppressive as slavery was, the Black population was able to develop and sustain meaningful domestic and kin arrangements. Prior to 1917, over ninety percent (90%) of all Black children were born in wedlock. It has only been in the past three decades that one begins to see significant changes take place in the Black family. Up until 1960, eighty percent (80%) of all Black children lived with both parents. However, by 1980, less than fifty percent of Black children live with both parents.

Male seasoning related to machoism and a privileged sex

have exerted impossible demands on males. The demands are psychologically crippling and physically lethal for many males. Machismo is an exaggerated awareness and assertion of masculinity. Male seasoning thus becomes a dehumanization process of indoctrinating you against yourself; a conspiracy designed to make men skeletons with no feelings and compassion for children, women or each other. Black men are particularly vulnerable to the process. Currently, the Black male's lifelines to masculinity are being systematically severed, impelling all too many of them to overcompensate in the sexual and violence arena. There is no ceremony, or ritual that has been institutionalized, as in ancient Africa or the Jewish Bar Mitzvah, to usher the Black male into proper manhood. Nobody ever officially tells him he has attained manhood, and there is generally too little to signify or certify it concretely.

Black males, for their part, accustomed as almost half of them are to losing their father's presence in early childhood, and looking to their mothers for both maternal and paternal sustenance, too frequently reach maturity with deep and unresolved maternal conflicts. Such men are doomed to live out these unconsciencious conflicts with maternal ambiguities in competitive struggle with their female partners. They are as clinical psychologist and sociologist Nathan Hare defines, victims of a "cupboard" syndrome in which, reminiscent of their mothers, they see in all women, all love objects, as extensions of their mothers and a love-hate source of nurturance, the cupboard that holds the good things fed them and, frequently, denied them in infancy by their mothers. This is a source of

much of the economic reliance of this segment of Black males on their mates and their exploitation of their mate's resources. They cannot stop sucking their mother's breast, so to speak (Hare, The Endangered Black Family, 1984). This tendency is compounded and made necessary, in large part, by the racist oppression of the Black male's capacity to thrive in the market place and the consequent distortions the Black male child tends to internalize regarding the masculine role of protecting and providing for his family.

Coping with male/female alienation in the coming bad years is an era of Black woman inclined to see her problem as one primarily resulting from some felt inadequacy of the Black man. The Black man recognizes that his problems derive from the White system of oppression, but often feels too powerless to cope and, blocked from the avenues of social power, may overcompensate in the sexual. If employed, instead of his relentless search for a new job, he may be overcome by anxiety and project his stress on his mate; or self-destruct and force his supervisor to fire him. At other times, he is impelled to patch up his beseiged masculinity with some multiplicity of women, the very conglomerate of which prevents him from quite fully and forthrightly confronting and shaping a lasting relationship with either one. Paradoxically, many find they have many women, but still can't be with someone they truly love. Males may have a choice of women, while, increasingly, the corporate/professional sister may have a higher paying job and a sleek condominium, only to drive around in her new car and Calvin Kleins alone.

The increase in Black singles is consistent with the contraints on the supply of eligible mates available for and interested in a monogamous marriage. Not only is there an excess of one million adult Black women (over age 18) in the Black population, but the institutional decimation of Black men leaves working class Black women with an extremely low supply of desirable men (i.e., employed and mentally stable) from which to choose. This is particularly true of men who reach the age of thirty and are single or divorced. Paradoxically, there is a larger number of never-married Black men at lower levels than there are similar Black women. (Glick & Mills, Black Families: Marriage Patterns and Living Arrangements (Atlanta: Atlanta University, 1979)). Many of the stable marriages are among couples in the Black working class. These are Blacks who finished high school, but have less than four years of college. The men in this group tend to be dependent on the wife's income to maintain a decent standard of living. Because they avoid the harsh economic repression of Black males in the underclass, it seems easier for them to maintain a stable marriage and average standard of living. Often, they are the "silent majority," the men who are underrepresented in the literature and general stereotypes about Black males.

Once we ascend the socio-economic scale, the men between the ages of thirty-five and fifty-four years in the middle class are more likely to remain single than their female counterparts, at least those with five years of college or more. (U.S. Bureau of The Census, Current Population Report, Series P. 20, No. 314, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government

Printing Office, 1978, pg. 31). Among the Black middle class, (i.e., four years of college or more), the shortage of Black males is complicated by a number of factors. Assuming a woman wants to marry a male of comparable education, there were only 339,000 Black male college graduates for 417,000 Black female college graduates in 1977. Moreover, the eligible pool of college educated Black men is further reduced by homosexuality, interracial marriages and the fact that many of them marry women with less than a college education. As a result, among Blacks (ages thirty-five to fifty-four) with five years or more of college, there are 52,000 eligible women for only fifteen thousand men. To illustrate the seriousness of the problem, the Census Bureau lists fifteen thousand divorced Black women in the same category and less than five hundred Black males. (Ibid). Small wonder, then, that competition among Black women is keen for that low supply of college educated Black males. And, it is the competition for those men that largely explains their high divorce rate. The marriages of these Black males are often disrupted by "the other woman." We see it in the statistics which show that Black women are more likely than White women to marry men who are four and more years their senior and who have been married before (Spanier and Glick, "Mate Selection Differences Between Whites and Blacks in the United States", Social Forces 58, August, 1980).

Another cause of the Black male/female dilemma, besides the structural and male seasoning problems, is related to the Europeanization of sexuality. This development has come on top of the subjugation and partial acculturation of Africans and

African-Americans (Blacks) wherein sexual and family relationships were destroyed and decimated. This process has been analyzed and charted brilliantly by a Nigerian professor from The University of Ibadan in a recent issue of The Journal of Mental Health and Society. The African professor revealed how "westernization" led to the disintegration of the African family and the social disorganization and psychological destruction that follows everywhere in the decline and mangling of family relationships. Where there once was family cohesion and community, there is now divorce, juvenile delinquency, crime and disobedience. Where the agrarian society had the extended family, industrialization brought the fragmentation of the nuclear family.

Today, in the post industrial society we live in, the family is further nuclearized, so that a new and still more amorphous family form is emerging, though presently without name. This condition of over-industrialization, with its stripping of the ceremonial, of the fiber, the organic connection of social relations, has led to isolation and excessive individualism. A culture of narcissism has developed; those who once longed to feel loved now are content to merely feel good. Thus, sex is more and more important in our schemes of things but produces less and less of any lasting value, serves increasingly no function beyond its own sake.

Within the era of Masters and Johnson, technique has taken priority over warmth and meaning, pleasure substitutes for intimacy and compassion. Where once we fell in love, we now make love.

In summary, the problems Black men and women have in their relationships often are shaped by external forces. Many have been unable to form a monogamous family due to structural impediments. In a society where money is the measure of the man, many Black males are excluded as potential mates because they lack the economic wherewithal to support a family in a reasonable manner. Given the traditional role definitions for women, definitions internalized by many Black males, the highly educated Black woman finds herself victimized by the fact that she has a higher educational and income level than most of the Black men in her pool of eligibles. Both of these factors are products of institutional racism and Black history in America. As stated by Sociologist Robert Staples, "The conflict between men and women may be more apparent than real. The real problem may be largely a demographic one with strong class overtones." (Staples, Black Masculinity, 1982). There simply are not enough Black men to go around and the ones available are not regarded as viable mates. As Patrice Rushen, the singer, has stated, "I think it is just a way to divert our attention from the fact that we have things that must be done together to make some headway. We're not dealing in times that afford us the luxury of being able to feel there's a problem with Black men that automatically creates a problem for the Black women and vice versa. We have to look for where the problems come from--and we might find it ain't us." (Patrice Rushen quoted in Jet Magazine, April 10, 1980, Pg. 30).

Regardless of the source of the problem, the high number of unmarried and divorced Blacks signals that all is not well

between Black men and women. The unbalanced ratio of men to women and greater degree of "Power" given to men is a combustible combination that creates a potential problem. In men, this power is often manifested as arrogance and insensitivity to women's needs. For women, feelings of insult and injury can add up to outrage. Racism and class may have been the forces which shaped Black relationships and their spectre may remain with us for the foreseeable future. However, the future of the Black family may rest upon those Blacks who resist the notion that racism and class will determine their personal relationships. Otherwise, it seems clear that racism and class may have decisively determined the nature of the most intimate association between males and females. Then, their capacity to resist racism and class, itself, may be brought into question.

A house divided against itself cannot stand.

RECOMMENDATIONS/STRATEGIES

* The creation, acceptance and practice of a new value system; requires an alternative value system which calls for a redefinition of reality in Black's own interest and image, for a new definition of man and woman and the kind of relationships they ought to have--social and personal transformation.
* Developing workshops and programs for teachers and administrators that urge them to show more understanding for the unique problems of Black males.
* Reevaluation of the traditional roles of males and females, parents and teachers as related to sexuality.

* Black women must develop empathy for what Black men are going through and understand they represent less of a threat to White society.
* Within family circles, Black fathers, whether present in the home or not, should spend more time with their children.
* Black mothers must instill in their sons that the concept of manhood should encompass weakness as well as strength, that sensitivity and toughness can co-exist, that achievement in the classroom is as important as excellence on the athletic field, and the respect of their teachers is the equal recognition of their peers.
* Recruiting and placing more males in pre-school and primary grades as teachers.
* Impacting agency Boards in the community to be more responsive to Black needs as related to culture, manhood development, self-reliance through entrepreneurial and income generating programs and activities.
* Lobbying for full employment and guaranteed income measures in government.
* Organizing community programs through a network of neighborhood centers, schools, churches, fraternal and professional organizations to keep young Black males off the fast track that leads to dropping out of school, substance abuse, premature fatherhood, crime and incarceration.

* Lobbying for government action to staunch the flow of hard drugs and to reduce the Depression-level rates of unemployment of Black parents and Black youth; but also organizing the Black community and leaders with the knowledge that it is not enough to wait for government action, but that we must assume more personal responsiblity for the plight of our children and young adults.
* Organizing and supporting community programs which are models of citizen participation and responsibility (i.e., Los Angeles Adopt-A-Family Program, Chicago, Alpha Phi Alpha--Project Alpha (Prevent Premature Fatherhood); Atlanta's Ebenezer Baptist Church Rite of Passage Program for developing manhood, etc.).
* Supporting expanding and replicating local programs that are providing viable services to young males in the areas of manhood development--Rites of Passage, Gang Prevention and Teen Fathers.
* Support of intact traditional one and two wage earner families (Financial Planning, Day Care, Health Services, Marriage and Family Counseling, Acculturation, etc.).

    Creation of Bartering Networks and Cooperatives (food and housing)

* Researching and assessing trends (local) vis-a-vis male/female relationship with future implications for the family.

* Development of an Afro-American Family Services Center which would provide the following services: Direct service, planning, organizing, coordination, technical assistance/training, research and dissemination activities.
* Assessing existing services and needs vis-a-vis the local Black community.
* Development of an annual report on the state of Black Cleveland.

    This is presently being done on an annual basis by The Urban League in Columbus and Philadelphia.

    Assessing socio-economic conditions with policy and prescription recommendations/strategies.

The Black Woman

Janice Hale-Benson, Ph.D. and Brenda Y. Terrell, Ph.D.

The spirit of the Black woman has been described as "gentle, powerful, nurturing, loving and sassy" (Essence, May, 1985). Black women, their mothers and their grandmothers have worked hard, achieving much, while losing greatly, and have contributed much to the survival of both Black and white America. Black women can look proudly at their history and see what appears to be insurmountable obstacles and ". . . look back and wonder, how I got over" as well as how they continue to make gains. The numbers of Black women who are college and graduate school educated and who maintain positions of authority and prominence in our community and in the community at large are increased. Opportunities for Black women are also increased. But all is not well for the Black woman.

Though gains as a group have been many, Black women continue at the bottom of the economic ladder. They remain the lowest paid workers in this nation (Essence, May 1985). Fifty-one percent of families below the poverty level are headed by Black women. These women are responsible for the health and survival of both themselves and their families. Actual and proposed budget cuts by the Reagan administration are directed at social programs that have provided a margin of survival for many Black women and children (Black Women's Health Project).

When we examine the kinds of jobs that are held by Black women, we find that among service workers, Black women have the lowest paying jobs of any group. Even though the 1980 Census figures reflect that there are twice the percentage of Black females in the professional and technical workers category than Black males, the males held the most prestigious and highest paying jobs, and the women were usually relegated to the more traditionally female, lower-paying, low-status professional occupations.

Between 1965 and 1976 the percentage of Black families headed by females increased 10 percent which represents an acceleration rate nearly 4 times that of the previous 10 years. Almost half of all Black children under eighteen are totally dependent upon the earnings of Black women.

Black women who are not caught in the cycle of poverty face obstacles in maintaining positions and status in middle class America. Many Black women who came of age in the sixties represent the first generation of women in their families who have successfully achieved college and graduate education and have moved into the realm of upwardly mobile professionals. For these women the challenges are manifold. The challenges that they face are new to their generation of Black women. Their socialization has not always adequately prepared them to meet the challenges of their new lives. There is limited opportunity for many of these women to find mentors who are sensitive to the challenges they face. Mentors are often white and/or male. In their efforts to maintain and improve their professional lives, Black women often lose control over their

personal lives. Relationships with family and friends suffer and at times may be nonexistent. Without a support network among co-workers, family or friends, feelings of isolation and loneliness are constant.

While the number of women moving up through the ranks in corporate America have increased, Black women have not progressed as well as white women or Black men. Black women in the corporate arena often find themselves in a situation of double jeopardy. Both sexism and racism thwart survival and mobility (Black Enterprise, August, 1985, p. 106).

A rapidly growing phenomenon in the 1980's is the one-parent family. Nearly 50 percent of the children who were born in the 1970's will spend part of their lives in single parent homes before they are eighteen years old. Since 1970 there has been a 79% increase in single-parent families.

The magnitude and seriousness of the problems faced by these women is astounding. Approximately 12% of white families are headed by women, while close to 48% of Black families are headed by women. The increase in Black families headed by women is not the simple result of welfare rules, discrimination or changing sexual morals. There is a direct relationship between the increase in joblessness of Black men and the numbers of households headed by Black women.

Advocates for children must become concerned about aid for single mothers. There is a need for changes in welfare benefits and qualifications, better job training and placement, better pay, extended unemployment compensation, adequate funding for child care centers, effective enforcement of child

support orders and expanded Medicaid coverage, especially for pregnant women.

Almost half of all female headed families with their own children under the age of 18 years were below the poverty level both in 1970 and 1980 in Cuyahoga County. The actual number of such families increased about 36% from 1970 to 1980.

Surveys of the juvenile criminal justice system show that of cases that come before it dealing with delinquency, neglect and abuse, 49.5% involved children who lived only with their mothers. Only 30% lived with both parents.

Related to the issue of single parenthood is the issue of teenage pregnancy.

Today children are carrying babies instead of schoolbooks. Adolescents are engaging in sex at earlier ages than ever before -- some as young as 9 years old. Two-thirds more young people are sexually active than were a decade ago, resulting in more than a million teenage pregnancies that occur outside of marriage. Twenty-nine percent of babies born to white teens are outside of marriage compared with 83 percent for Black teens. Many Black teenage mothers report that they remain single because their boyfriends cannot afford to get married. This is a result of the high unemployment rate for Black men and youth.

Teenage pregnancy is one of the major problems confronting the Black community today. More than any other group, Black teen mothers lack the necessary resources to adequately care for their babies. They often do not seek prenatal care. They have the highest rates of toxemia and miscarriage and die more

often from the complications of childbirth than do white teens. They also give birth to more premature and underweight babies which are major causes of infant mortality, childhood diseases, and mental defects. The children of these teenage mothers tend to be less healthy, to achieve less academically, and to continue the cycle by becoming teenage parents themselves. (Fssence Magazine, April, 1984).

For Black women, health is a major issue. The age-adjusted death rate for Black women is 66% higher than for Black men. While the rates of cervical cancer are decreasing for white women, these rates are increasing for Black women. Though fewer Black than white women suffer from breast cancer, more Black women will eventually die from it. Black women show the highest susceptibility to diabetes, with a rate of 34%, as compared to a rate of 24.3% for white women, and a rate of 21.8% for Black men. Black women have the highest admission rate to outpatient psychiatric services. Greater than 50% of adult Black women live in a state of psychological distress (Health Fact Sheet, National Women's Health Network of Georgia). In efforts to deal with these and other stresses, alcohol and other chemical abuse among Black women is increasing.

Recommendations

Black Women

1. The social policies that deprive Black men of the opportunity to express their manhood must be examined. There is a direct effect on Black women of the ways in which this society stifles the potential of Black men.

2. Social policy should enhance the educational attainment and earning potential of Black women as a group. Black female workers must be connected to the future. They must move away from the lower paying traditional female occupations, even in professional worker categories. The increase in female headed households suggests that Black women are increasingly carrying the economic burden of supporting children. Public policy should increase their earning ability.

3. The health issues that affect Black women should be researched and targeted by social service delivery systems.

4. Churches and social service agencies need to devise strategies for helping Black women create and maintain support networks.

5. Corporations and other employers need to assist Black women in establishing mentoring relationships and networks.

Single Parent Families/Teenage Pregnancy

1. How can churches, schools and social agencies assist adolescents in delaying the onset of sexual activity?

2. Recognizing that engaging in sexual activity is ultimately an individual decision, how can churches, schools, and social agencies assist teens in the effective use of contraception when they are sexually active?

3. Study needs to be done on the values and attitudes of teen mothers so that programs designed to arrest the rate of teen pregnancy can be on target in dealing with at risk populations. Too many of the programs assume that they know how to proceed. There has been too little study of the attitudes of the teens themselves.

4. There should be programs designed that intervene with Black teens who are at risk for teenage pregnancy. Once there has been a study and analysis of the best type of intervention program, children as early as age 9 should be targeted for such intervention.

5. Schools need to devise strategies to retain teen mothers in school by providing day care for children and other services to meet their needs.

6. There is a need for schools and social service agencies to provide information on prenatal care, nutrition and parenting to teen parents. Such information will alleviate some of the negative side effects related to teen pregnancy such as premature birth, infant mortality, learning disabilities, and maternal mortality.

7. How can respite support be provided to single heads of households? Middle income families have housekeepers, baby-sitters, vacations, and other relief from the routine of childrearing. How can social service agencies provide respite for single mothers? Such relief may contribute to a more positive relationship between parent and child as well as reduce stress related problems such as child abuse.

8. Social policymakers need to assist single parent families with before and after school childcare. Churches can also arrange enrichment classes for children in conjunction with after school childcare.

Education, Child Rearing and Socialization in Black Families

Janice Hale-Benson, Ph.D.

The Black family lives in two cultures and the Black child will be forced to learn to live in both the minority and majority cultures.

W.E.B. DuBois, in Souls of Black Folks, pinpointed the dilemma when he wrote:

> It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness--an American, a Black: two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.
>
> The history of the American Black is the history of this strife--this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the other selves to be lost.

Black children are educationally at risk. There is an achievement gap between Black and white children in the schools of this nation. A recent report by the National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE) (1984) tells us that nearly 28 percent of the Afro-American high school students drop out before graduation. This figure approaches 50 percent in some large cities. For those who are in school, average achievement on standardized tests falls two or more grade levels below the average of Euro-American students. Even though Blacks are only slightly more than 10 percent of the population, they make up

40 percent of the educable mentally retarded population. (18)

An examination of the achievement statistics of students in Shaker Heights City School district documents this disparity between Black and white achievement (Jefferson, 1985). This school system is racially integrated. Of the 1,450 high school students, 40 percent are Black and 60 percent are white.

In every grade level, Blacks scored significantly lower than whites on the Stanford Achievement Test which is used nationally to measure reading and mathematic skills.

Seventy-eight point two (78.2) percent of Black students between the seventh and eleventh grades scored below average on the reading test while 89 percent of the white students scored above average. Math scores were equally low. Seventy-nine point seven (79.7) percent of the Black students scored below average and 87 percent of the white students scored above average.

The classroom performance is parallel to the test scores. In the class of 1985, 51 percent of the Black 11th grade males and 55 percent of the Black females have grade point averages below 1.99. In contrast, only 20 percent of the white males and 9 percent of the white females have grade point averages below 1.99.

On the other hand, only a mere 10 percent of both Black male and female students have grade point averages at or above 3.00. While we find that 34 percent of the white females and 37 percent of the males have grade point averages above 3.00. Officials of this school system point out that these scores reflect a trend found in other school systems throughout the country.

NABSE (1984) points out further that the difficulties Black children are experiencing in elementary and secondary schools are reflected in an erosion of achievement in higher education:

> African Americans represent about 13.5 percent of the college age population (18-24 years). But African American students represented only 9.1 percent of the Associate degrees, 6.5 percent of the Bachelors, 6.4 percent of the Masters, 3.9 percent of the Doctorates, and 4.1 percent of the first professional degrees in 1980. African American participation in graduate and professional education remains exceptionally low and, in recent years the situation has actually deteriorated. (20)

This report points out further that one third of Black students are enrolled in community colleges and are in programs that do not necessarily give credits toward a baccalaureate degree. We also find that while about 75 percent of all white high school seniors go on to college, only about 20 percent of Black seniors do so. Further, only about 12 percent of the Black students who enter higher education complete college and only 4 percent enter and complete a graduate school.

The participants in this Task Force were charged to bring to bear their collective wisdom to developing a unified approach to addressing educational issues facing the black family: the impact of testing programs; curriculum reform; access to math/science and computer technology; overrepresentation of Black males in special education and dropout populations; the Federal Government's role in education versus decentralization; resource deployment; financing public education; and adult illiteracy, are a sampling of the issues to be addressed.

Overall recommendations of the Education, Child Rearing and Socialization Task Force are as follows:

* To examine the "superbaby syndrome" that has swept through the white community. Are white children being given a head start through gifted programs and academically oriented preschools while Black children occupy a poverty/remedial track? Are white children targeted for enrichment and Black children targeted for remediation?
* How can the Black community achieve a holistic education for Black children in which they are educated about Afro-American heritage and culture in all of its diversity throughout the curriculum?
* How can standardized testing be de-mystified for Black parents so that they can facilitate their children in performing well on such measures?
* What is responsible for the lower academic performance of Black male children? Public schools, universities, social service agencies and churches need to design educational programs specifically designed to facilitate achievement among Black males.
* How can more information be provided to Black parents about how to provide a road map to achievement for their children? The high motivation that Black parents provide for their children to achieve has been well documented by scholars. What seems to be missing is being able

to identify the mechanisms for achievement and resolving stumbling blocks along the way.

* Explore how parents and community organizations can assist children in coping with the world in which they live as well as changing the world around us.
* Explore the existing patterns in teaching children to handle aggression so that it works for them instead of working against them. How can parents teach social skills so that children learn non-violent techniques of interpersonal conflict resolution? How can social skills be taught in such a way that children are able to negotiate mainstream institutions as well as Afro-American culture? Formal social (and coping) skills instruction should become part of the school and church curriculum.
* Examine the difference between adjusting to an unjust and racist society versus acceptance of an unjust and racist society.
* Explore how socio-economic conditions impact on families and their rearing of children (latch-key children).

Policy Recommendations

1. There is a need for quality universal pre-school programs.
2. Parent Education Centers should be established in all school systems in order to provide information on:
   a. Testing and rights of children;
   b. Ways to pursue quality education for children;
   c. Ways to facilitate children's learning at home.
3. Pre-schools should be regulated through the Department of Education.
4. City government should provide funds for Parent Education programs in the Black community.
5. Schools should have parent involvement contracts available for parents which require them to attend orientation and education sessions.
6. Funding should be provided for organizations who want to provide parent education.

Research Recommendations

1. Funding should be granted to research an educational agenda set forth by Black scholars to address problems and issues they identify.
2. There is a need to research how teachers of young Black children (pre-school and primary grades) make decisions regarding academic grouping of Black children and how these decisions impact on a child's ultimate progress in school.

3. There is a need to research how to actualize the potential of late blooming Black children.
4. There is a need to study the preschool experiences of Black children who are achievers.
5. Research is needed on socialization strategies for Black male children and adolescents to intervene in street, drug and gang culture.
6. There is a need for qualitative research on the ways in which Black males learn.

Self Help Recommendations

1. The Black community, particularly the Black church, should provide formal instruction to Black children on their African American heritage.
2. Additionally, Black churches and other social service agencies need to create innovative programs that address parent education, social skills training for children, and mentoring networks (particularly for Black males). These programs should be for parishioners and for the community.
3. Parents should monitor children's out of school activities and studies.
4. The Black churches and other organizations in the community should sponsor organizations like Simba and the Boy Scouts for cultural learning, mentoring and overall socialization for Black males.

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THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN SUPPORTING THE BLACK FAMILY

by Richard L. Jones, Ph.D.

An accumulation of economic and social pressures, feeding on the longstanding effects of racism, has produced a special crisis for the black family in America. In the words of Lerone Bennett, Jr., the meaning of the 80's is the recognition that we are currently experiencing a National Black Emergency. The most striking measure of this cumulative effect of racism is the rise of female-headed households, now the majority in the black community. This trend has produced an especially resistant and infectious form of poverty. The black condition can no longer be improved without addressing black family problems.

No group brought a stronger family tradition to America than blacks, whose family life often continues to incorporate the extended family patterns of African societies, which were organized around kinship and family itself. But it was not until the 1960's that black family life--after generations of corrosive government and social policies--met destabilizing forces: virtually compulsory migration, rapid urbanization and ghettoization, increasing structural unemployment, pervasive institutionalized discrimination, and family-weakening government policies.

The black community, especially civil-rights and community organizations, constitutes the natural leadership in any effort to help restore black families to their historic strength and the larger society should also focus on the black family as a

vehicle for providing and transmitting opportunities. As yet, there are virtually no coherent programs or policies to address the problems that destabilize black families.

The black family has been a brilliantly adaptive institution in a country where racial and economic hostility would long ago have destroyed a weaker family structure. After 300 years of struggle and resilience, black families need special attention. A focus on the black family, in whatever form it is found, has enormous potential to radiate improvements in the status of black people and to eliminate remaining problems.

The print and electronic media play a significant role in shaping the community's perception of the challenges facing the black family gaining an understanding of its inherent strengths, as well as assuming a principle role in community efforts which are initiated to improve the status and the physical and emotional well being of the black family.

The media represents a powerful influence in our daily lives. The major concepts, ideas, and values of a society, including attitudes and behavior, are often organized and expressed through the media. Media as it is experienced, teaches and can be responsible for assisting in the formation of perceptions of self, family, community, and others within and outside the community, the society and/or the culture.

Central to any discussion of the effects of the mass media is the acknowledgement of the ubiquity of the mass media in American society. Statistics substantiate the media's pervasive presence; for example, Americans currently possess more than four radios per household, and circulation of daily news-

papers exceed one per household. Moreover, almost all homes have one or more television sets, with about 20 percent of them linked with cable (Broadcasting Yearbook, 1983; Roberts, 1974).

Americans make use of the media they have acquired. Numerous studies indicate that adults report that use of the mass media accounts for over 50 percent of their leisure time, and children profess to watch television in excess of four hours per day (Comstock et al., 1978; Lee & Browne, 1981; Pearl, Bouthilet, & Lazar, 1982; Roberts, 1974). Indeed, it has been estimated that by the time the average child reaches adulthood, he or she will have spent more time watching television than in any other single activity except sleep (Liebert, Neale, & Davidson, 1973).

Americans also place a great deal of credibility in the media, especially television, as news sources. Two-thirds of the U. S. public rely on television as its source of news, and almost half rank television as the most believable news source (Broadcasting Yearbook, 1983).

Black Americans' use of and credibility in the media are no less extensive than that of the general population. In fact, their use of radio and television exceeds that of whites (Bogart, 1972). In addition, Blacks rely on television, in particular, for various kinds of information, including consumer information and political news and information (Block, 1970; Stroman & Becker, 1978). Moreover, some Blacks report viewing television to obtain information on other Blacks and the Black community (Shosteck, 1969).

Mass communication researchers have devoted an inordinate amount of attention to the effects of the mass media.[1] This is understandable since intuitively it appears obvious that information is communicated with the intent of causing some effect, of shaping the attitudes, opinions, or behavior of others (Roberts, 1974). Thus, the study of communication effects has historically been centered around the stimulus response model of communication. That is, researchers sought evidence of a given message producing a specific response.

The ability of the media to focus public attention on events and individuals has far-reaching consequences; agenda-setting research illustrates some of these consequences. Research using the agenda-setting framework asserts a direct causal relationship between the content of the media agenda and subsequent public perception of what the important issues of the day are. As a result of this relationship, events and individuals gain in public significance as they gain public attention (Benton & Frazier, 1976; Funkhouser, 1973; McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Shaw & McCombs, 1977). Thus, the media, through their effect on public awareness, are able to affect cognitive change among individuals.

In addition to having cognitive effects, the media may have effects on the behaviors and attitudes of media consumers. Imitative performance by a viewer of a behavior seen on television is taken as evidence of media effects. The development, on the part of readers or viewers, of attitudes or expectations from something obtained from the print or broadcast media is also viewed as evidence of the effects of the media.

Identification is another possible effect of the media. This refers to a media user's involvement, through a psychological relationship, with a character appearing in a media presentation (Weiss, 1969). The vicarious participation of the media user in the feelings and behavior of the character is viewed as evidence of the effects of the media.

Before considering the effects of the media on Blacks, it may be instructive to briefly consider the manner in which Blacks have been portrayed in the media. Traditionally, the media have excluded Blacks from media presentations (Lambert, 1965; O'Kelly & Bloomquist, 1976; Seggar & Wheeler, 1973; Shuey, King, & Griffith, 1953; U. S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1977). When Blacks are featured in the media, they are generally cast in subordinate, servile and comedic roles and other such narrow roles that show nothing of the diversity of Black life and culture. The Reverend Jesse Jackson recently referred to this in explaining his failure to attract white support in his bid to capture the Democratic presidential nomination. He noted that this failure is partially due to "the five deadly ways" in which the media portray Blacks: "as less intelligent, less hardworking, less universal, less patriotic, and more violent than we are" (Sherwood, 1984). In short, Black portrayals in the media are unflattering, misleading, and designed in such a manner as to reinforce stereotypes commonly associated with Blacks.

What impact does the media have on Black viewers, listeners, and readers? Is the portrayal of Blacks identified above harmful to Blacks? Many writers think so and a number of

them have expressed the opinion that the media, particularly television, may have deleterious effects on Blacks. As an example, Clark (1971) argues that television damages Black self-concept by its nonrecognition of Blacks. Similarly, Tan & Tan (1979) reasoned that since Blacks are often portrayed negatively or are non-existent in television entertainment programming, Blacks viewing such programming may learn negative self-concepts.

A great deal of the concern expressed about the portrayals of Blacks and their families is related to the perceived negative impact that television has on Black children. Rosser (1978), for example, maintains that television sometimes hinders Black parents' efforts to teach pride and self-respect to their children by its glamorization of negative images. Powell (1982) provides a similar view in her assertion that the nonrepresentation of Blacks on television is particularly destructive to Black children's self-concept because it denies the importance of their existence.

In a discussion of the dysfunctional personal attitudes that Black children may acquire from television, Janis (1980) elaborated on how television may have a negative influence on Black youngsters' self-concepts. He maintains that "because Blacks are often shown in menial occupational roles, Black youths may acquire the impression that professional and leadership roles are out of the question for them."

The bulk of research on media effects and Blacks, like the critical commentary, focuses on Black children. This is understandable since the media are more likely to have effects on

children than adults. Clearly, childhood is a period during which individuals are especially dependent on others for information and thus they are particularly susceptible to the influence of mass mediated information that assists in their cognitive and affective development (Bandura, 1969). Moreover, as Comer (1982) explains, television is especially powerful for children because early visual images and attitudes have tremendously more impact than later images and attempts to change attitudes.

Black children are indeed susceptible to the effects of the media, especially television. Not only do Black children report watching television more, they are also more likely to believe in the reality of television (Dates, 1980; Donohue & Donohue, 1977; Greenberg & Atkin, 1978). Moreover, Black children are more likely than other children to say that they identify with and imitate television characters (Dates, 1980; Nicholas, McCarter, & Heckel, 1971a, 1971b; Stroman, 1983).

The implications of the findings reported above are related to a consistently documented effect of the media: Black children do learn from television (Dates, 1980; Gerson, 1966; Greenberg & Atkin, 1978; Greenberg & Dominick, 1969; O'Bryant & Corder-Bolz, 1978). Gerson (1966), for example, reports that Black adolescents use the media to learn how to behave with members of the opposite sex. Similarly, Greenberg & Atkin's (1978) study indicates that Black children rely on television to learn how different people act in different situations, as well as to find out about jobs, decision-making, and problem-solving. Previous research also suggests that

Black children learn behaviors from televised models (Nicholas, McCarter, & Hechel, 1971a, 1971b; Thelen, 1971; Thelen & Soltz, 1969). The suggestion here is that since Black children use the media for such diverse learning, the media certainly have the potential to play a major role in the socialization of Black children.

The media also appear to have effects on learning in Black adults. There is evidence that Black adults learn from television (Leckenby & Surlin, 1976); in particular, Blacks report using the political content of newspapers to learn about candidates for political office and to gain assistance in voting (Stroman & Becker, 1978). Blacks also report learning about Black psychology and the strengths of the Black family from the television mini-series "Roots" (Howard, Rothbart, & Sloan, 1978).

"Roots" also had other media effects on Blacks. Seemingly it had a pronounced, albeit short-term, impact on Black attitudes and perceptions, as well as interpersonal communication, knowledge, and emotions among Blacks. Reportedly "Roots" aroused a number of emotions in Blacks, including sadness, anger, triumph, and tears (Howard, Rothbart, & Sloan, 1978).

One important, though indirect, effect that the media has had on the lives of Black Americans is related to the role the media played in escalating the civil rights movement into an issue of public concern. Although a number of conditions gave rise to the movement, the media was very instrumental in pushing civil rights onto the public's agenda. This served to ensure that consideration was given to issues, events, and

personalities connected with the movement and Black life and culture.

Conversely, the media must be criticized for its failure to continue to affect the lives of Blacks by continuously reporting on issues germane to the survival of Blacks. In describing what the media does not tell us, Comer (1982) makes the point that "television has not explained that the policies of this society created a disproportionate number of overwhelmed Blacks, and that the Blacks we see in comedic roles on television are really a product of inadequate, immoral and inappropriate social policy -- policy beyond the control of Blacks." Had the media accepted the opportunity to explain such (or if they would do so now), they would have a significant impact on Blacks. For, in doing so, they would provide the basis for a detailed understanding of the causes of Black/white differences and they would help to shatter some of the stereotypes and myths associated with being Black in American.

These, then, are some of the effects that the media has on Blacks. As can be observed, the critical conjecture outweighs the empirical evidence, and few of the assertions discussed earlier have been backed by solid empirical evidence. Yet, the findings of previous research do suggest that the media has significant cognitive and psychological effects on Blacks, particularly Black children.

In concluding, it is worth noting that there has been little attempt to fully understand the special effects that the media has on Blacks. It is equally clear that an enormous

amount of research is needed to fill in the void in our knowledge in this very important area. Considering the potential for research to contribute to media policies and practices, it seems imperative that rigorous research on the effects of the media on Blacks should be instituted. Of particular importance is research which examines the effects that the introduction of new communications technologies, e.g., cable television, have on Blacks.

NOTE

1. For comprehensive reviews of the effects of the media, see Klapper, 1960; Maccoby, 1964; Schramm & Roberts, 1974; Weiss, 1969.

Recommendations

1. How can Black consumers of the media become organized in pressuring the communication industry to be more responsive to creating positive images of Black people in all of its outlets (broadcast, print, theatrical, and film)?
2. There is a need for Black parents to mediate the images that are projected to their children about Black people in all areas of the media. Schools, churches, social service agencies should assist in parent education for self defense.
3. Many Blacks complain about the lack of adequate "on air" personalities in the media, but another important area is the lack of behind the scenes personnel who are involved in all areas of media production as technicians. While many Blacks criticize the lack of roles for Black actors and actresses, very few are aware of the limited opportunities for Black screenwriters, directors and producers. There is also a dearth of national and international distributors of major media products.
4. Strategies need to be devised to support positive media products such as the Cosby Show. This show gives Blacks a chance to see a positive image of Black family life instead of the poverty inspired images created by Norman Lear (Sanford & Son, What's Happening and Good Times).
5. The Black community needs a mechanism to control the types of media role models who are projected to Black children. Either buffoons like Mr. T. or androgynous entertainment

figures like Prince or Michael Jackson are projected while the media attacks strong Black men like Rev. Jesse Jackson, who challenges America's agenda for Black people. It is important that Black male leaders like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. receive media attention.

6. Media should also be defined to include the books that are used with Black children in school. These books should be examined to be sure that the pictures, values and content are multi-cultural.

THE BLACK ELDERLY IN BLACK FAMILIES

by LaVonne Turner, Ph.D.

The black elderly are a forgotten people! They suffer the dual burden of being old and black. In addition, they experience a societally imposed burden of uselessness and neglect. Older persons, in general, are discriminated against solely on the basis of age and denied access to services. The plight of the black elderly is compounded because they are confronted with discrimination not only on the basis of age but also on the basis of race. Joseph Dancy, states it this way:

> "It is rough being old in America because people over sixty years of age have a bad public image; it is doubly rough to be old and black and subject to racist sterotypes. Thus, elderly blacks have two strikes against them in the view of the dominant society and the impoverished quality of their lives reflects this." (1977)

For many of the 1.9 million black elderly (8% of the total black population), they have to deal with a life of poverty and discrimination (1981, Department of Health and Human Resources). The black elderly know "what it means to spend a lifetime in substandard housing, isolation, loneliness, limited education, grossly inadequate income, poor health, malnutrition and a dearth of urgently needed services." (Lindsay, 1971) Many have lived an existence of poverty and social isolation. However, with the diminishing physical and mental capabilities that accompany old age, this plight becomes even more intensified.

It is not commonly known that the black elderly migrated to the North, in large numbers, during the 1970's. Between 1970 and 1977, approximately three-fifths or 66% of the elderly black population migrated to the central cities. With this sharp shift of the black elderly from rural to metropolitan areas the effects of poverty are more acute. Dancy among others suggests that for the black elderly life in the central cities is similar to life in a concentration camp. Dancy puts it this way:

> Today many elderly blacks find themselves locked into urban areas and having limited mobility, facing such problems as poor transportation, crime, limited income, and poor housing. Living in central cities, for example, has usually meant living within a prescribed arena that restricts the black elderly's full participation in American society." (1977)

Current literature suggests that a striking majority of Blacks over 65, are less well educated, have inadequate incomes, suffer more illnesses, have a shorter life span, live in poorer quality housing, and have less of a choice as to where to live and where to work. (Lindsey, 1971; Turner, 1983; 1980 U.S. Census) Studies have also shown that blacks exit the workforce earlier, are forced to retire more often, negatively anticipate retirement and were less socially active than their white counterparts. However these factors have very little impact on their perceptions of life quality. The black elderly generally report moderate satisfaction with their present life style. This suggests that for those individuals on the lower end of the economic strata, most often blacks, meeting basic survival needs has been a part of their daily routine. There-

fore, a reduction in an already meagre existence often does not pose enormous difficulty for them. (Barfield and Morgan, 1974; Lloyd, 1958; Turner, 1983).

THE BLACK ELDERLY IN GREATER CLEVELAND

Available data on the elderly in Cleveland tends to support the findings of national studies (i.e. Harris Study, Myth and Reality of Aging, etc.). If one reviews current demographic information on the City of Cleveland, it reveals that 15.4% of the 103,937 elderly, 60 years of age and over, currently live in poverty. The mean social security income is $3,985. These statistics become even more dismal when stratified by race. Approximately 22% of white and 43.5% of the black elderly in the City of Cleveland live in poverty.

Research regarding life quality of the Cleveland elderly conducted by the Federation for Community Planning confirm the findings discussed above. According to the Harris et. al. (1985) study of the Cleveland elderly, the most significant problems expressed by black elders focused on maintenance of survival needs. They expressed concerns about having enough food, shelter, clothing, and adequate health care. These problems become more severe for the black elderly in Cleveland because they are less educated, have limited mobility, and perceive that there are few agencies open and accessible to them. The data most certainly suggests that it is rough being old and black living in Cleveland. However, in spite of their very

"real" plight, the black elderly in Cleveland also express moderate satisfaction with the quality of their lives.

What, then, are the implications of this data in terms of focused program development in Cleveland? The answer to this question must be addressed not only by professionals in the field of gerontology, but also by community organizations, service providers, the black church, and the elderly themselves. It is clear that the answers must involve reformulation of governmental policy to developing community-based neighborhood strategies.

Understanding there exists a void in Cleveland in terms of an organized group that advocates, plans, and develops programs to meet the needs of the black elderly, the Think Tank convened at "The Black Family" conference agreed to establish itself as an ad hoc Task Force. The Black Elderly Task Force's role is two-fold:

To help the community understand that:

- They do have problems which they ought to do something about;
- They are not alone and helpless, that sources of aid exist and can be tapped.

To help the community to organize:

- To examine the problem;
- To distinguish among problems as to significance, priority, and solvability;
- To develop innovative programs, and
- To advocate for the reformulation of governmental policy that addresses the needs of differing populations.